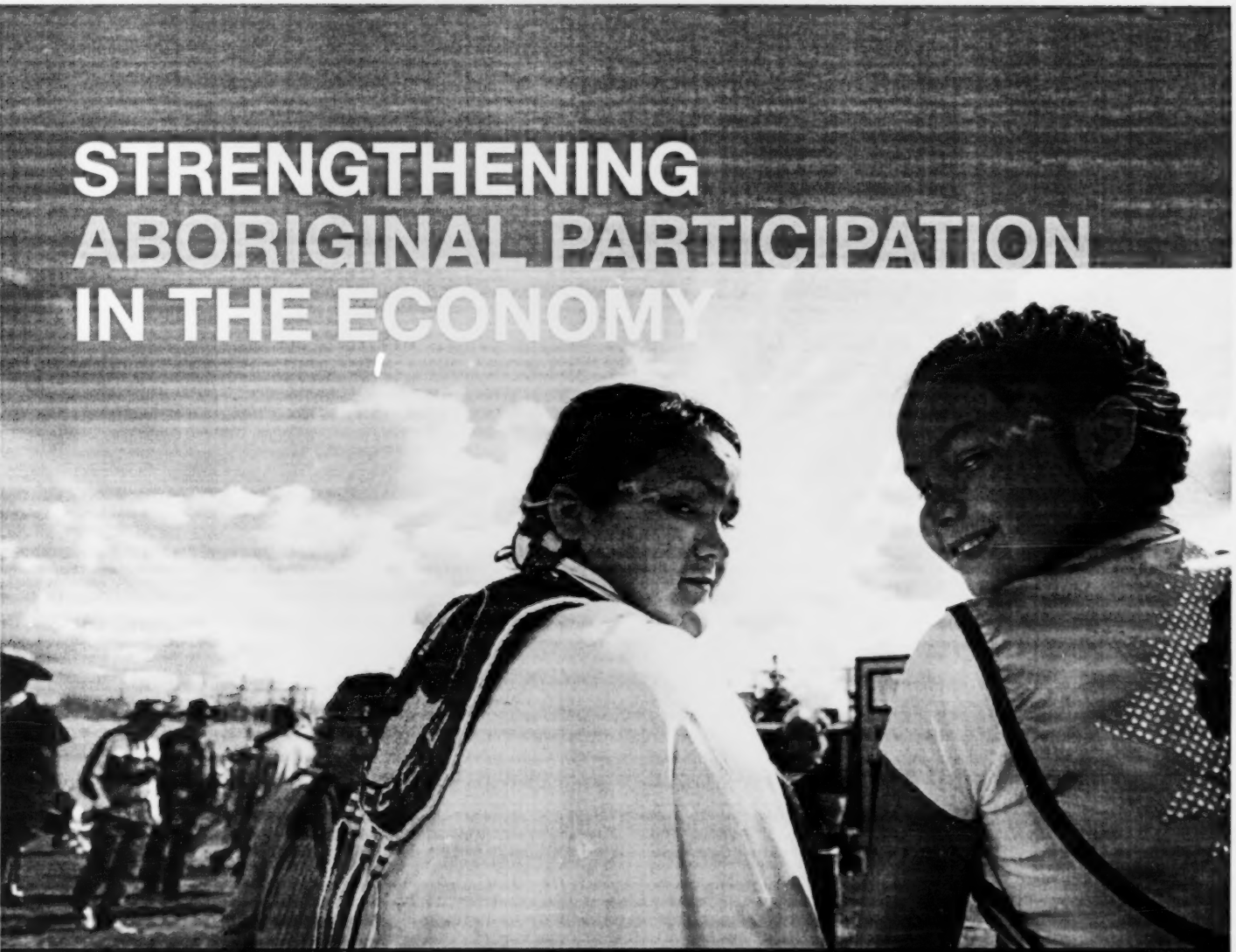
STRENGTHENING ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMY



ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS
ANNUAL RESULTS 2008/09

Government of Alberta
Aboriginal Relations

STRENGTHENING ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMY

Strong, vibrant Aboriginal communities are an essential part of our province's economic future. I am pleased to present the third annual results summarizing the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations' key initiatives supporting Aboriginal economic development in Alberta.

This was a year of exciting growth and new opportunities. The Gathering for Success International Symposium, hosted by our Ministry and Treaty 7 Management Corporation, created an unprecedented forum to share international perspectives on how to increase Indigenous participation in local and global economies.

The First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative continues to be the cornerstone of the Government of Alberta's $8 million annual commitment to encourage Aboriginal partnerships, strengthen economic capacity and provide entrepreneurial support.

I want to thank all the economic development partners who are forging innovative new connections with Aboriginal entrepreneurs, businesses and communities. We invite you to read and celebrate their success stories featured in this report and in more detail on our website.

I look forward to more successes in the year ahead. By working together we will continue opening doors to prosperity for Aboriginal people in Alberta.

Honourable Gene Zwozdesky
Minister, Alberta Aboriginal Relations
Deputy Government House Leader

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Aboriginal Economic Partnerships	4
Gathering for Success International Symposium	6
First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative	8
Developing Partnerships	10
Supporting Entrepreneurship	12
Building Capacity	14
Recognizing Achievement	16
Highlighting Success	18
Future Directions	22

The companion document entitled FNEPI Grants for the 2008-09 Fiscal Year is available online at the Aboriginal Relations website **www.aboriginal.alberta.ca**.

ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

The Government of Alberta, through the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations, supports economic development programs aimed at increasing the economic participation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in Alberta's economy.

Following the success of the Government of Alberta's "Gathering for Success" International Symposium in June 2009, Aboriginal Relations recognized the need to better link Aboriginal communities with economic development resources.

Aboriginal Relations responded by expanding the ministry's economic development portfolio from its original focus on grant funding (the First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative or FNEPI) to a more comprehensive program that includes:

- **profiling Aboriginal economic development successes;**
- **ongoing expansion of an economic resources tool kit;**
- **continued support for community engagement; and**
- **new ways to engage youth in Aboriginal economic development initiatives.**

This is a shared vision, flowing from the goals of Alberta's *Aboriginal Policy Framework* and based on feedback from Aboriginal communities in Alberta. As a result of this expanded vision, the FNEPI Annual Report of previous years has transformed this year into an Annual Review of the ministry's Aboriginal economic development partnership initiatives.

ALBERTA ABORIGINAL RELATIONS

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations works with communities and other partners to enhance social and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people in Alberta.

VISION

Strong and vibrant Aboriginal communities and people, fully participating in the opportunities of a prosperous and diverse Alberta.

MISSION

Oversee the development and alignment of Government of Alberta legislation, policies and initiatives that affect Aboriginal people and their rights, by building effective relationships with Aboriginal communities, industry and governments.

GCHS

GATHERING FOR SUCCESS INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

An international symposium on Aboriginal economic development strategies took place June 28-30, 2009 in Banff, Alberta. The historic event, hosted by Aboriginal Relations in partnership with Treaty 7 Management Corp., attracted more than 700 attendees including internationally recognized speakers and experts who shared their insights and successful strategies focused on Aboriginal prosperity.

The goal of providing opportunities for new Indigenous partnerships was realized, and participants left with a new level of knowledge-sharing and economic development strategies to take back to their communities.

The event had an immediate and long-term impact on Aboriginal communities in Alberta. A number of the conference's international delegates extended their stay in the province to join a study tour of Aboriginal communities and businesses. A commitment was made to continue youth engagement opportunities with the one hundred Aboriginal men and women, ages 18-29, who participated in the conference sessions designed to support the entrepreneurial spirit of the next generation of Aboriginal business leaders.

The symposium's legacy project, an online tool kit of web-based Aboriginal economic development information, was launched immediately following the conference. The Aboriginal Relations website is home to this growing repository of valuable resources and business contacts that will help promote Aboriginal partnerships and new economic opportunities.

MINISTER'S PANEL SESSION - moderated by Alberta Minister Gene Zwozdesky and Nicole Robertson
(L-R) Karen Collins, *Métis Nation of Alberta*; Bill Hutchinson, *Saskatchewan Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations*; Montana First Nation Chief Carolyn Buffalo; Floyd Roland, *Premier of the N.W.T.*; Dr. Piapot First Nation Chief Rose Laboucan; Gerald Cunningham, *President of the Métis Settlements General Council*; and Hector Goudreau, *Alberta Minister of Employment and Immigration*.

Symposium hosts Hon. Gene Zwozdesky (Aboriginal Relations) and Grand Chief Charles Weaselhead (Treaty 7 Management Corp.)

"The conference was an excellent opportunity to learn of the excellent work happening within Aboriginal communities across Alberta, BC and even Australia, New Zealand and Italy. I was really impressed with the opportunity for the young Aboriginal people to attend the conference and their contribution."

Piri Robinson, Kahui Tautoko Consulting
Vancouver, Canada

"The conference opened my mind to a new way of tackling economic development in Aboriginal communities. I will be bringing back to Australia many new ideas, models of best practices and new relationships."

Jenny Samms, Ministerial Task Force on Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, Australia

700 conference delegates

Symposium youth ambassadors

"To be involved in the planning of the Youth Stream at the conference was a remarkable opportunity. My experience as a volunteer and participant allowed me to gain valuable experience and increase my understanding of Indigenous economic development initiatives."

Nicole Minde, Assembly of First Nations Youth Representative
Hobbema, Alberta

FIRST NATIONS ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVE

The First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative (FNEPI) supports Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework and is the cornerstone of the Government of Alberta's commitment to strengthen Aboriginal participation in the economy.

Developed in 2005 with input from Alberta First Nations and industry leaders, the program is focused on three main objectives designed to help strengthen First Nations economic capacity.

1) *Develop sustainable partnerships* **between First Nations and industry, government and other stakeholders;**
2) *Build capacity* **to strengthen the ability of First Nations to take advantage of current and future economic opportunities; and**
3) *Support entrepreneurship development* **through business knowledge and skills transfer to ensure Aboriginal people living in Alberta have the opportunity to share in the province's prosperity.**

PROJECT DELIVERY

FNEPI's inter-related programs are delivered in collaboration by two provincial ministries, each promoting partnerships between First Nations, industry, governments and other stakeholders.

During FNEPI's launch in 2005, a commitment was made to regularly review and evaluate the program. With the participation of First Nation communities and industry leaders, a formal review took place in 2007 identifying areas that the already successful program could continue improving.

ANNUAL FUNDING & OUTCOMES

The Government of Alberta invests more than $8 million annually to encourage Aboriginal partnerships and economic participation.

In the 2008-09 fiscal year, Aboriginal Relations provided $4.77 million and Employment & Immigration contributed $3.4 million towards this goal. This support resulted in:

- ten new economic capacity building projects;
- New Regional Economic Partnership Coordinators placed with 12 First Nations/Tribal Councils;
- 14 new strategic economic initiatives projects involving 18 First Nations;
- over 190 detailed engagements for Aboriginal entrepreneurs;
- four 15-week Entrepreneurial Training programs delivered to over 40 Aboriginal participants;
- four 15-week Management Training programs delivered to First Nation owned company management;
- three business proposal writing workshops piloted with two Tribal Councils, resulting in 10 more workshops planned for the coming year;
- five procurement workshops, developed with industry and facilitating Aboriginal participation in economic opportunities; and
- three youth entrepreneurship camps and five symposiums for youth throughout the province.

Additional programs and services that support Aboriginal participation in Alberta's labour force are offered through Employment and Immigration.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the $8 million in FNEPI support originally committed for 2008-09, the Government of Alberta secured $8.7 million from the federal Community Development Trust Initiative (CDTI) to further allocate towards Aboriginal economic development.

Aboriginal Relations will administer $2.7 million of this CDTI funding over three years to assist Aboriginal communities at economic risk due to sole dependency on one local industry or business. Seven communities will each receive funding over a three year period ending March 31, 2011 to develop Community Transition Plans. Aseniwuche Winewak Nation, Calling Lake, Chipewyan Lake, Nakcowinewak Nation, Peerless Lake, Trout Lake and Wabasca Métis Local #90 will build new economic diversification options by developing capacity, facilitating new training and skills development, and increasing participation in the knowledge economy.

Alberta Employment and Immigration is expected to allocate $6 million of the CDTI funding for the same three-year period. Initiatives range from Aboriginal business development and entrepreneurial support, to facilitating new business partnerships, to establishing employment resource centres on-reserve.

A complete listing of FNEPI projects is available on the Aboriginal Relations website at www.aboriginal.alberta.ca.

FNEPI
DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are critical to enhancing Aboriginal participation in the Alberta economy. The Strategic Economic Initiatives (SEI) program provides funding to support strategic, sustainable partnerships between First Nations, industry and other partners.

	NEW STRATEGIC ECONOMIC INITIATIVES
2005–06	10 projects
2006–07	16 projects
2007–08	14 projects
2008–09	14 projects

The program helps create long-term partnerships that will result in tangible benefits for First Nations communities. Projects must have a regional focus, at least one partner, and must:

- address community priorities;
- demonstrate significant strategic value; and
- contribute to an improved understanding of First Nation economic development.

Since 2005, the SEI program has supported 54 strategic economic partnerships with First Nations and Tribal Councils.

SUCCESS STORY

SAMSON CREE NATION TRUCKING SERVICE

The Samson Cree Nation (Hobbema, Alberta) has leveraged FNEPI support to establish a successful trucking transportation service – a company that is providing long term, sustainable employment and investment returns to benefit the First Nation.

Cree Star Transport Ltd. began operations in June 2009. The company is wholly owned by Samson Cree Nation and will eventually employ at least ten Samson Cree members. Profits are reinvested into the firm or paid as a dividend to the shareholder, Samson Cree Nation. The company has focused on completion of its safety training required in order to successfully bid on larger contracts.

Community leaders secured $86,000 in support from FNEPI's "Strategic Economic Initiatives Program" and combined it with $18,000 in support from Alberta Employment and Immigration to eventually leverage an additional $415,000 contribution from Aboriginal Business Canada.

"With support from FNEPI, Samson Cree Nation was able to leverage its $175,000 investment to attract close to $500,000 in commercial financing that helped purchase the trucks and fund the initial operating costs associated with establishing a viable trucking operation."

Marco Casella, General Manager, Cree Star Transport

FNEPI SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

FNEPI's entrepreneurship development and support initiatives aim to create innovative and sustainable Aboriginal owned businesses by providing Aboriginal entrepreneurs with increased access to business information and advisory services.

In 2008-09 Alberta Employment and Immigration's Aboriginal Development Branch supported Aboriginal entrepreneurs through the following initiatives:

- entrepreneurial training, after-care and access to business advisory services, including business planning, training and mentoring;
- on-reserve business management and small business start-up training to individual Aboriginal entrepreneurs or to the employees of Bands and Band-owned businesses;
- support for organizations developing entrepreneurship skills of Aboriginal women and youth;
- on-reserve procurement workshops that provide participants with an overview of the services contracted by oil and gas companies, how to become aware of these opportunities and the requirements to successfully respond to requests for proposals;
- on-reserve seminars to establish and clarify the fundamental nature of project management; and
- partnerships with Alberta's Aboriginal Capital Corporations (ACCs) to provide business development support to Aboriginal entrepreneurs interested to start or expand a business. In 2008-09, the ACCs collectively supported 190 detailed engagements with Alberta Aboriginal entrepreneurs.

ABORIGINAL CAPITAL CORPORATIONS

Aboriginal Capital Corporations, of which there are 33 across Canada, are Aboriginal-owned business development and lending organizations. These are important financing and advisory sources for Aboriginal business development. They provide business services, including loan support, to Canadian status and non-status Indians, Inuit and Métis individuals, associations, or partnerships that are partly owned or controlled by Aboriginal people on or off-reserve.

Through FNEPI, the Government of Alberta supports the four Aboriginal Capital Corporations (ACCs) in Alberta. In 2008 the Alberta ACCs celebrated twenty years of providing loan capital and business assistance to Aboriginal people in Alberta, including:

- more than $165 million in funding;
- support for approximately 5,000 businesses; and
- 8,000 associated employment opportunities.

The ACCs hosted an Alberta Aboriginal Business Symposium in October 2008 to commemorate this milestone. This was a historic gathering for Alberta's Aboriginal business sector. The event showcased successful Aboriginal entrepreneurs and their best practices; fostered capacity development for Aboriginal business and economic development; helped develop new partnerships and identified new business opportunities available to Aboriginal people.

SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL CAPITAL CORPORATIONS

Alberta Employment & Immigration funds a series of partnerships to support the development of Aboriginal entrepreneurs and businesses.

Alberta Indian Investment Corporation: Business start-up support services for existing and prospective clients, market development initiatives, business workshops and youth entrepreneurship.

Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc.: Business start-up support services for clients and direct business plan development to facilitate financing for business start-up.

Settlement Investment Corporation: A series of workshops in business management. One-on-one training in a variety of business management functions such as accounting.

Indian Business Corporation: Workshops in business management and knowledge development.

Alberta Women Entrepreneurs: Business start-up support services for Aboriginal women in Alberta looking to start or expand a business.

Community Futures Treaty 7: Third party services for business start-up support to existing and prospective clients.

FNEPI
BUILDING CAPACITY

Capacity building initiatives help strengthen the ability of First Nations individuals, communities and businesses to participate in economic opportunities.

FNEPI programs include:

- **Regional Partnerships Development (RPD)—helps First Nations communities and organizations employ and train Regional Economic Partnership Co-ordinators to work with industry, government and other potential partners.**
- **Economic Capacity Building (ECB)—supports rural and urban Aboriginal communities and organizations to develop the skills and knowledge needed to identify, plan and implement economic development projects.**
- **Labour Force Planning—helps First Nations communities and organizations with human resource planning specific to workforce development. Includes labour force planning tools and resources, identification of new economic opportunities, and community readiness assessments.**

Since its inception in 2005, FNEPI has supported 35 capacity building projects and the hiring of more than 50 Regional Economic Partnership Co-ordinators to work with First Nations and Tribal Councils across the province.

	REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP COORDINATORS	ECONOMIC CAPACITY BUILDING	LABOUR FORCE PLANNING
2005–06	11 projects	5 projects	6 projects
2006–07	13 projects	10 projects	10 projects
2007–08	15 projects	10 projects	14 projects
2008–09	12 projects	10 projects	15 projects

SUCCESS STORY

PAUL FIRST NATION HOLISTIC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In 2008/09, the Paul First Nation (Duffield, AB) used $65,000 in funding from FNEPI's Economic Capacity Building program to further develop the community's "Project Charter." This multi-year community development plan uses a holistic approach to remove barriers and help band members participate in employment and economic opportunities.

Thanks to the Project Charter, a new community-based team is now in place to provide consistent services for members dealing with employment barriers and other socio-economic pressures. Community members are provided with regular updates including new training and employment opportunities.

Other notable accomplishments include a new youth strategy that offers resources to overcome employment and financial barriers young Aboriginal people face. Important new relationships with industry, unions and social agencies have also been developed to support Paul First Nation members in employment and economic activities. This has resulted in 24 new jobs for Paul band members plus 15 new employment placements for youth.

"We had identified the barriers that needed addressing and with financial support from FNEPI, we were able to create new programs, resources and relationships to help our members begin to overcome these challenges."

Chief Dan Paul

RECOGNIZING ACHIEVEMENT

The Aboriginal Woman Entrepreneur Award of Distinction

The Aboriginal Woman Entrepreneur Award of Distinction recognizes outstanding achievement by Aboriginal women entrepreneurs in Alberta. This award is presented annually by Aboriginal Relations during the Alberta Chambers of Commerce Alberta Business Awards of Distinction event.

The 2009 award was presented to Nicole Robertson of Muskwa Productions and Consulting by the Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Aboriginal Relations.